

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph at Page 8, line 1, with the following:

With respect to the biodegradable polylactic acid resin (A) for use in the present invention, the structure thereof is not limited and any one can appropriately be used as long as it is a polylactic acid resin having biodegradability. The terminology "biodegradable" used herein means that biodegradation can be recognized in, for example, the "Determination of the ultimate aerobic biodegradability and disintegration of plastic ~~materials~~ materials under controlled composting conditions" according to ISO 14855 (Japanese Industrial Standard K6953). Biodegradable polylactic acid resins, 60% or more of which is degraded within half a year in this determination method, are preferred.

Please replace the paragraph at Page 13, line 17, with the following:

In the production of polylactic acid resin through direct dehydration polycondensation of raw materials, the polylactic acid resin of high molecular weight having a strength suitable for the present invention can be obtained by polymerization according to the process wherein lactic acid or a lactic acid compound and a hydroxycarboxylic acid compound as raw materials are subjected to azeotropic dehydration condensation in preferably an organic solvent such as a phenyl ether solvent, especially preferably while removing water from the exiting solvent ~~outflowing~~ by azeotropic distillation and returning the resultant substantially anhydrous solvent to the reaction system.

Please replace the paragraph at Page 45, line 21, with the following:

Comparative Example 6

The same reactor as used in Example 1 was charged with 100 parts by weight of propiolactone (produced by Tokyo Kasei ~~kogyo~~ Kogyo Co., Ltd.), 0.072 part by weight of stannous chloride and 0.78 part by weight of ethylene glycol, and satisfactorily purged with nitrogen. The mixture was agitated in a nitrogen atmosphere of atmospheric pressure at 140°C for 3 hr, and further agitated under a reduced pressure of 1 torr at 140°C for 4 hr. Thus, polypropiolactone was obtained.